



News Release

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Winter air quality dips, along with temperatures

OLYMPIA — You may have noticed spectacular evening skies this winter, yet those sunsets frequently are a sign of air quality problems that occur this time of year. Winter weather patterns can trap air pollution – especially from wood stoves and fireplaces – near the ground, where it can build-up and may threaten people’s health.

The state Department of Health is reminding people air pollution can be [harmful to their health](#). It can be especially harmful for people who have a lung condition like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD), or with heart disease.

Air pollution has fine particles that can cause immediate and long-term health effects when inhaled. It’s a good idea to check local air conditions and limit outdoor activities when air quality conditions are poor.

The amount of air pollution that causes immediate health problems varies from person-to-person. For people who are sensitive to air pollution, even a short outdoor stroll can cause wheezing or shortness of breath. Others may not have problems until they do more strenuous activities like yard work, running, or shoveling snow. Kids and adults over 65 are among those who should limit their activity during periods of poor air quality.

Air pollution often can’t be seen or smelled, but the state Department of Ecology [monitors air conditions](#) and posts them online across the state. More [information and statistics](#) on air quality in your community can be found on our website.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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